

Halo 3: New Allies

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Summary: After Truth made his way to Earth, Spartan 117 had only one mission. Until he encountered The Flood

1. A Long Ride Home

**Halo 3**

**Chapter 1. Location: Aboard Forerunner Ship en-route to Earth**

John stood up blinking, trying to regain his focus. His leg was hurting him badly from the fall. As he regained his vision, he saw that he was surrounded on all sides by Brutes and Jackals. His instincts kicked in and he dived for cover to protect himself. He picked up a Needler and emptied a clip around the corner. A satisfying roar followed by an explosion made sure it hit something. He then checked his belt for a grenade while trying not to get burnt by all the plasma that was slashing the air. A bolt hit him and his shields drained. He primed his grenade and lobbed it. The explosion shook the floor and bodies went flying past him and landed on the deck. He saw a Jackals shield lying on the ground and he seized it. He stuck it on his wrist and activated it. The force nearly knocked him back but he maintained his footing. The glow was terrible. It was starting to hurt his eyes, his filters compensated for it though. He looked around the corner to check if anything was there. It was clear. He slowly and cautiously moved forward. Over the COM he heard Lord Hood.

"Chief, are you OK" Lord Hood asked

"I'm fine. I am aboard Truth's ship and I am proceeding." He replied

"You must kill the Prophet ASAP. Earth depends on it."

"Understood."

The COM snapped off. He kicked over the dead bodies of Brutes and Jackals. He found a Covenant Carbine and a Brute Shot. These would come in handy he thought. There was something wrong. Surely there should have been more guards here the John thought to himself. He didn't have time to ask questions though so he proceeded through the next door. He swept the room and found no contacts. There was nothing there but a GravLift. He stepped onto it and he felt a rushing sensation as he was being pulled down. On the way down Truths voice echoed throughout the ship

"My brothers, we have found the home of the switch to activate the sacred rings. We will emerge victorious and the Great Journey will have begun. Nothing can stop us brothers. Nothing."

John felt his feet touch the floor and he brought his gun level. The room was clear. Strange, he thought. Then on the COM Lord Hoods voice boomed in his ears,

"Chief I am sending a squad of ODSTs and Elites to assist you. There will also be a box of weapons and ammo. Meet them in the Hangar. I am uploading co-ordinates to your visor. Get going."

"Yes Sir."

A blue arrow appeared on his HUD. 157.89m away. He headed through the door on his right and he came into some Jackals. His energy shield deflected most of the blast but his hand started to burn from the heat. He dropped it, shot a few rounds and jumped behind a wall. He leaned around the corner and shot one in the head. There was only two left. A shot hit his arm and his shield drained. He picked off the one who shot him and ran at the last one. He sidestepped around him and slammed his fist into his head and he felt his skull cave in. He let his shields recharge before entering the next room. After passing through sixteen more doors and going on three more GravLifts he came to the Hangar. The squad had managed to hold off some aliens but some were injured but medics were treating them and they looked like they would be okay. There were engineers everywhere, hovering over control panels and fixing weapons. One was up with the squad fixing an Elites shield. John ran towards them. One of them, it looked like a SGT, stepped towards him,

"Sir, SGT Liams come to give you a hand to kick some alien ass."

"Alright everyone," John shouted, "we are going to kill to split up into 3 groups, Alpha, Beta, Charlie and Delta. 3 Elites in each team. Clear?"

"Sir, yes Sir" they all shouted.

"Elites. Before we enter any room you activate your Active Camouflage and scout ahead. If it has contacts in, you will take them out silently, and swiftly. HellJumpers, you follow. Any questions?" no one said anything, "all right then. Elites, split into threes. In Alpha Team, PVT Mellor, PVT Ben, PVT Morris and myself."

They all formed up behind John

"In Beta, SGT Liams, PVT Rogers, PVT Hawthorne and PVT Baker."

John watched as they all gathered in the corner,

"In Charlie, PVT Ron, PVT James, PVT Mountford and PVT Fern. The rest of you are in Delta. Delta will be at the back because of their wounded

The injured people got into a group.

"Let's get moving. Truth is going to know we are coming. Let's go."

"Sir, yes Sir" they all chanted

John picked up a new rifle. It looked the same as the MA5B but it had a grenade shooter and a scope. It felt light and comfortable. On the side he saw the words "MA7B Combat Rifle". He shouldered it and then looked in the box. There were some new grenades; he picked up 2 Frag grenades, a Stun grenade, and a Phosphorus grenade. After he was happy with his equipment John started towards the door that went in the direction of the NavPoint. Everyone followed.

John checked his rifle to make sure he had a full clip. He stuck a Frag grenade in the launcher and secured it. He came to a door. He waved his hand for the Elites to come through. They then disappeared and all he saw was the faint rippling of the air. The door opened and they passed through and the door slid shut. The ship shook and John grabbed onto a pole to balance himself. The lights then went dead.

"Great, just what we need. Bloody perfect." PVT James yelled

"Shut it or I'll shoot you myself. Ok?" the SGT told him. John activated his torch and looked around. They were in the middle of a small room. The walls were giving off a faint and eerie purple glow. He turned to one of the walls and froze. He saw something. Something familiar. Stuck on the wall was a green-brown blob, it was pulsating. Tentacles were holding it up. John walked to it, rifle raised. He poked it with the end of his gun. It squirmed and moved.

"SGT, pass me your knife. Everyone else stand back now"

The SGT moved forward and gave him the knife. He then retreated to a wall. John dug the tip of the knife into the blob. He dragged it down. There was a POP, and a dozen infection forms sprang out.

"OPEN FIRE!" John yelled but three ODSs were already dead. There was a burst of fire and three popped just at John's feet. John wheeled round and fired at the cluster on the floor. They all popped in unison. There was one left and it scuttled towards PVT Mountford. He screamed but was soon silenced as the creature dug its impentator spike down his throat and into his spinal column. The SGT grabbed it and hit it with the butt of his weapon. The room was totally silent. John had to take in what this meant. Flood. On this ship. Heading to Earth. John contacted Lord Hood,

"Sir. You are not going to believe this. Flood. On this ship."

The COM was silent.

"Chief find the Prophet, take him down and blow this ship. If one infection form gets to Earth were doomed. There is a Fury tac-nuke in the supply crate I sent you. Put it in the engine room. When you are ready for extraction, call me and I will send in two Pelicans. Hurry." The COM snapped off.

"Alright you heard him, let's go." Static blasted in his ear as he heard an Elite,

"FLOOD, TOO MANY, RUN!" it then went dead.

John ran into the next room. A combat form leaped at him and knocked him back into the wall. He shot it and its arm fell off. He shot it again and it fell over. He got his breath back and joined the ODSs. He sprayed the Flood with bullets until the last one fell. He looked around for any of the Elite survivors. There was one. John called a medic to help him up.

"Truth is in a room behind a locked door. You will need my, COUGH, plasma sword to get it." The Elite told John. He handed him a Plasma Sword.

"Fix him and take him to the Hangar. While your there get me that Fury tac-nuke as well. You. Pvt Fern. Go with him."

They ran through the door. John marked PVT Mountford, PVT James, PVT Ron, and PVT Baker as KIA on his team roster. After five minutes they returned. He handed John the nuke.

"Right, come on men, we are almost there" John told them. They ran through the door not stopping.

They entered a room. It was empty. John swept it and turned his torch off because the lights had come back on. Something wasn't right. It seemed too quiet. As they reached the other end of the room John heard a scream behind him. He whipped around. A combat form had grabbed a marine and twisted his head all the way around. Bullets holes covered its body and it then fell to the floor. A marine checked PVT Hawthorne. He stood up and shook his head. John marked him as KIA. They carried on. They then came to a locked door. Behind it was Truth. John took out the Plasma Sword and cut along the seams of the door. He then tugged it open. Inside Truth was hovering in front of the view display. There were about twenty Brutes there. One wheeled around and barked. The rest turned and opened fire. A Brute Shot grenade tore a hole through SGT Liams stomach and he fell shaking. John then opened fire but it was no use. One ran at him and sent him flying into the wall. He then blacked out.

John's vision was blurred and he had a cracking headache. He managed to get his vision focused again. He was being held by two Brutes. In front of him were his ODSs, all piled on top of each other. Dead. Truth then turned to face him.

"it seems that you are not all you are made out to be. Your friends," he pointed at the ODSs, "were no different. Easy. Even with the Elites, Grunts and Hunters on your side, do you think that you stand a chance against the Covenant? In about five hours we shall be reaching Earth. We will then destroy your defences and activate the Sacred Rings. You and your friends have done nothing." He turned

towards a chieftain Brute, "tie him up and drop him out of the Hangar."

"Of course, noble Prophet."

John was then hit on the head again and he blacked out.

John felt groggy. He regained his vision, again, and he couldn't move. He looked at himself and saw the chain around him. The Brutes were over by the controls. One noticed him and said,

"we are at Earth. Enjoy the show while you can." He then barked at the other and went back to the controls. John turned on the internal speakers in his helmet. He opened a COM to Lord Hood.

"Sir, I have been unable to kill the Prophet. I will set the nuke but first I need the Pelicans assistance when I say."

"Roger that Chief. Give me the signal and they will on their way to you. Just make sure you set that nuke, the ship cannot be allowed to land on Earth."

"Yes Sir" John looked around and saw that his weapons were gone. Luckily the nuke was still there.

"I hope you can breathe in space human. Because your gonna be there for some time." He opened the Hangar door.

"Sir. Now. Go." There was a roaring of jets and two Pelicans sped into the Hangar. The Brutes jumps and started shooting them. Their 90mm chin guns put them down. More Brutes ran into the room. They started shooting but were killed. The wounded Elite was still in the corner. John grabbed him and put him in the back of the Pelican. John set the nuke to blow in 5 minutes. That was plenty of time. More Brutes kept on coming. John tossed the nuke and it landed on the control panel.

"Punch it." John told the Pilot and they backed out of the Hangar.

Grogg was shooting at the Pelican trying to stop it. When they disappeared from view he ran towards the control panel. An engineer tried for three minutes to stop the countdown, but to no avail. Grogg roared and yanked it off. He jumped on it but it carried on counting down. He then yelled,

"Open the Hangar doors." A Brute pushed a few buttons on the panel and the force field disappeared. He then strapped the bomb to a Banshee flier. He climbed inside it and set it on a straight path away from the ship. After he programmed it he pushed a button. It flew out of the Hangar. They watched it for a minute and it finally blew. It looked like an orb of fire from this far away.

"Increase security. This must not happen again." He barked at the others and they all ran off to lock all doors and place automatic plasma turrets around the ship. "The Great Journey will not be delayed."

**Halo3**

Chapter 2. Location: Control Room, Delta Halo

"I am surprised that you had to ask." The Monitor said to The Arbiter.

"Yes but where is it." Johnson asked with impatience in his voice.

"Earth. Where else. How you did not know is a mystery. Don't you and the Human race live there?" The Monitor replied. The Arbiter turned to the other Elites on the platform and told them to contact Oslee'yun. Get him to bring a Phantom down here to extract them.

"Come on. We need to get out of here. Oracle, are you coming with us?" The Arbiter asked.

"Yes. You will need my help to combat the Flood."

Outside the Control Room a Phantom roars down. The Arbiter jumped into the GravLift followed by Johnson and Keyes. Inside The Arbiter sat comfortably in one of the seats. Keyes and Johnson had a lot of difficulty. Over the radio Oslee'yun's voice boomed,

"We will be at the cruiser in 14 minutes Arbiter."

For the rest of the journey The Arbiter explained what they would be doing. They would be going into the High Charity to receive vehicles and weapons and any reinforcements that they could get. When they boarded the cruiser Oslee'yun rushed off to the control room and set a course for the city. The Arbiter took Keyes and Johnson towards the armoury of the cruiser. When they got there The Arbiter picked up an Energy Sword, 4 Plasma grenades and two Plasma Rifles. Keyes and Johnson just stood and looked at him.

"Feel free to take any weapon." The Arbiter told them both. Keyes walked towards a Covenant Carbine and shouldered it. She also took two Plasma Grenades and a Beam Rifle. Johnson just stood there and said,

"I never thought I'd see the day when I would be using these pieces of crap. Ain't you got any Human weapons on board?" Johnson asked The Arbiter

"There may be some Flood bodies on board carrying those weapons. But until we find them I recommend you at least take something from here." He replied. Johnson picked up 4 Plasma Grenades, a Brute Shot and a Needler and a Plasma Rifle.

"Okay. We need to get to the control room now. Follow me. And be cautious around every corner. There could be anything aboard this ship." The Arbiter told them and he stepped out of the room into a luminous passageway.

After passing through half the ship The Arbiter detected motion around the next corner. He held up his hand to tell the others to stop. He activated his camouflage and went around the corner. There

was a pack of Brutes and a dozen Jackals standing over 7 dead Elite bodies. He went back around the corner and primed a Plasma Grenade. He tossed it onto a brute and he detonated in a cloud of blood and blue vapour. Johnson and Keyes opened fire while The Arbiter tossed another Plasma Grenade. It bounced off a Jackals shield and detonated sending the Jackal and an unfortunate Brute flying into the wall. Johnson took out his Brute Shot,

"Fire in the hole!" he yelled, and he launched two grenades into the group. They detonated with a BANG. After the smoke had cleared there was nothing left but flesh and bone. Johnson searched the bodies and recovered a MA77 Close Combat Shotgun,

"Finally. Something I can use." He dropped the Needler and the Plasma Rifle and picked it up. He loaded it and then turned to Keyes, "how can you use those weapons?" he whispered, "It's bloody impossible." He turned and followed The Arbiter.

The Arbiter stopped and looked around.

"Our quickest route to the bridge is through that passage-way." He told them pointing at a small corridor. He headed down it. The further he headed into the passage-way. The darker it became. He felt uneasy about being in such a small space. It was the perfect place for an ambush.

"Johnson." He yelled

"Yeah?" He replied

"Throw me your torch" He said. The torch came flying over his head but he managed to reach out and grab it in time. He pressed the button and light flooded the passage-way. He pointed it down the passage-way and saw that they were close to the end. As The Arbiter left the passage-way a group of Jackals appeared at the other end and started firing. Johnson threw a Plasma Grenade down there and it detonated and sent them flying.

"Come on. There's bound to be more." Johnson yelled. Keyes rushed forward and Johnson just made it out of the passage-way before a pack of Brutes were at the other end. The Arbiter fired his Plasma Rifles and the blue energy slashed at the air. They were too inaccurate though to hit the Brutes. Keyes took out her Beam Rifle and took out five of the before it overheated. They started charging down the passage and roaring. The Arbiter took out the closest one with his Plasma Rifles. Johnson fired a grenade down and blew one to bits. The Arbiter vanished. The last Brute came out of the passage and as he stood up an Energy Sword was rammed through his stomach. He struggled and shook, and finally slumped over. The Arbiter re-appeared and took the sword out of him. Keyes picked up his Brute Plasma Rifle and holstered it. They then set off towards the bridge. They encountered no more resistance. On the bridge Oslee'yun was staring at the view screen. The screen was displaying a picture of High Charity. The Arbiter couldn't see the streets because of the green fog. There was one building that had Flood falling from it. A blast of plasma blew out of the door and a Flood fell to the floor.

"Set the GravLift over that building" The Arbiter told Oslee'yun.

"As you wish." He answered and tapped a button on the control panel. The ship moved a little and there was a shudder throughout the ship as the GravLift appeared on the building.

"Come," he said to Keyes and Johnson, "we must hurry." And he."

"Arbiter, take five of my Elites with you. They will be helpful." Oslee'yun told him.

"I shall." He replied. He headed out for the GravLift.

When they arrived there the lift shone a glowing purple. The Elites that Oslee'yun had sent were already there and were leaving the ship. The Arbiter turned towards Keyes and Johnson,

"Have either of you used one of these before?" he asked them,

"I have." Johnson replied. "Ma'am, it's simple. Just walk into it."

"Alright, you." The Arbiter pointed at Johnson, "You will go first." Johnson stepped onto the lift and he felt a rushing sensation flood his body. "You, next" and Keyes stepped on to the lift. The Arbiter followed.

3. A Bit Of Turbulance

**Chapter 3**

**Location: Aboard UNSC Frigate "Highland". **

John stepped off the Pelican and looked around the bay. The Hangar was virtually undamaged. There were eleven Longsword fighters and twenty-four Pelicans. UNSC soldiers and engineers were running around the bay, collecting weapons or fixing broken control panels. A video link snapped into view on his visor.

"Chief, this is Captain Stanford. It's good to have you on board. I need you in the Bridge. Double-time. Hurry." The Captain told him.

"Yes Sir." John replied and the video snapped off. John ran towards an elevator and punched in the command for the Bridge.

John arrived at the bridge. The view display showed thousands of UNSC ships holding off tens of thousands of Covenant ships. We seemed to be failing.

"Sir. Reporting as ordered" John shouted.

"At ease son." The captain replied. "Chief, we have a problem. My ship has intercepted a message from Truths ship. They have been giving every ship in their fleet the co-ordinates to a thing called "The Ark". I don't know what it is but all I know is that it is on Earth. Fortunately, it is underneath our Weapons and Vehicles Research facility. Luckily I managed to send a transmission to them and they have built up their defences. I need you to get down there and help them. I have prepped a Pelican with ammo and men to

transport you down there."

"Yes Sir." John replied.

"When will you be ready to move?" Stanford asked,

"Immediately." John replied.

The Pelican tumbled and turned through the Earth's atmosphere. John held onto a grip that hung above him. Out of the ramp colour whipped past in a blur.

"ETA is twenty seconds. Prepare for landing." The Pilot told them over the radio. John braced himself for landing. There was a slight thud and then the transport came to a stop. John stepped out.

John looked around himself and saw he was in a jungle. There were Warthogs driving around. Scorpions were patrolling the area. Two men greeted John and took him to the base. Inside John met Admiral Baker.

"Sir, I have been assigned to defend and guard this place from Covenant attack. Permission to start straight away Sir?" John asked the Admiral.

"Granted. Chief, do whatever you can to stop the Covenant from overtaking this base. I have some new weapons and vehicles at your disposal. If you make your way to the Armoury I have twenty Marines there ready to help with the base."

"Yes Sir." John replied.

In the Armoury the walls were covered with portable gun turrets and new weapons. Outside the Armoury was the Garage. There were four new vehicles and there were five of each. The first was like a normal Warthog but with two mounted chain guns. On the side of it the word Ripper was written. The next was a Locust. It was a helicopter with five missile pods and two mounted mini guns. Then there was a tank that looked identical to the Scorpion tank but it was called The Lion. The last vehicle looked like the best to John. It was a massive tank; five other Marines could have easily fit inside it. There were portholes in the side where Marines could fire out of. It was called a Battle Fortress. Back in the Armoury the twenty marines arrived.

"Sir, SGT Adams here. We are going to help you defend the base. What did you have in mind Sir?" he asked John.

"First, get sixty marines over here. I want all of these vehicles to be manned." the SGT radioed all of their Pilots and a few more Marines. "I want all of them turrets controlled by someone." John ripped a map of the base off the wall, "I want them here, here, here and here," he said pointing at the map. Fifteen Marines grabbed a turret each and hauled it towards their specified position. I want Snipers on the roof of the base, a Sniper and a Spotter. I want Rocketeers to be in the passenger seats of all vehicles. I want Assault teams to be made, each team made up of fifteen men. And I want those Locusts to patrol the area." John told them.

"Yes Sir" Adams replied, and he hurried off to prepare the

base.

John walked into the Armoury and looked around. There were four new additions to the Human arsenal, the MA8B which he had already handled, the new rocket launcher with four barrels instead of two. It was called the Shark. There was also a minigun, which John took and put it around his neck; on the side it read The Punisher. There was a new pistol with two types of ammo, explosive and shredder, it was called the Dominator. John also picked up a MA8B rifle, a combat knife and four Frag Grenades.

"O' Holy One, our Stealth Cruiser, Invisible Death, has managed to slip past their MAC guns and is making top speed towards The Ark." Gor told the Prophet of Truth, "It should be there in sixty-six Units. O' Noble One our new recruits are aboard that ship, our Scalpers. They will be able to remove any threat."

"Very good Chieftain, we must now concentrate all of our fire on just one of their gun stations to break their ranks. We must then pass through and land on Earth. The Great Journey is nigh Chieftain. We will soon have started. Launch the boarding craft. Contact all ships. Tell them to target all of their orbital guns. Make a break in their ranks. Once we have defeated a sufficient number, we go through and land near The Ark." Truth replied.

"Yes, O' Noble Prophet of Truth." And he walked away.

4. Base Defence

**Chapter 4**

Location: African jungle Congo Basin UNSC Weapons and Vehicles Research Facility.

"Chief!" Yelled the Admiral over the COM. "They're here."

"Yes Sir. I am on my way." John replied. The COM snapped off. He started walking to the doors but was knocked off his feet by an enormous explosion that was followed by the yells and screams of UNSC soldiers. John started running. He came to the door and noticed a wounded Marine,

"Sir, be careful. They got snipers all over the place. They got tanks and phantoms. Andâ€¦" he then coughed and died. John looked outside. There were fires everywhere. Marines lay scattered on the ground. But so did many Covenant bodies. John zoomed in on his MA8B and picked off a few Jackals. He turned left and saw some stairs. He ran down them and encountered a Brute. He shot it twice and shoved his knife into its side. It howled with pain and fell over. The turret emplacements were holding up well. One of them had a huge pile of bodies in front of it. John lobbed a grenade into a cluster of Jackals and they went flying everywhere.

"Chief, there is a bunker on the other side of the base. It is called the Gazebo Cover. I need you to take whatever vehicle you want and get over there. Any Covenant you encounter, kill them. We can't afford any losses. This thing that they are after is too important." The Admiral told him. The COM snapped off. John ran back to the Garage. Pilots were getting into Rippers and Lotus. John stopped a

Ripper and got in the driver seat. An ODSST got in the passenger seat and the two chain guns were manned. John drove down the ramps that lead outside. This new jeep handled a lot smoother than the others. Outside, it was extremely bumpy but the Rippers suspension absorbed most of shock. Overhead two Banshee fliers sped towards them firing plasma as they came. One bolt missed Johns head by inches. It was so close that his internal temperature rose thirty degrees. The chain guns blared and tore them to pieces. One of them landed in front of them and John had to skid to a stop. He started the engines back up and drove round it. He sped back up to top speed. A Phantom hovered over a group of Brutes and Ghosts. The ODSST took out the guns on the Phantom, while the gunners took care of the Brutes. After the Phantoms guns were off the ODSST took out some of the Ghosts. The gunners tore holes through Brutes and Jackals but more just kept on falling from the Phantom. The ODSST kept on firing at the Phantom until its engine blew and it spiralled down and exploded taking the Brute and the Jackals with it.

"Sir, I've only got one more rocket left." The ODSST told John,

"Aim it a vehicle, don't waste it on infantry." John replied. In the sky, John could just make out a dozen more Phantoms soaring in. He sped up. When the first Phantom arrived a swarm of Drones flew out of its GravLift. The gunners filled the air with bullets but one got caught by a hail of crystalline needles. He jumped off and landed on the floor where he exploded in a cloud of purple smoke.

"You," John yelled at the ODSST, "Man that turret."

"Yes Sir." He shouted back. John swerved in and out of dead bodies when a Drone landed on the windshield. It fired a plasma bolt through the window and it caught John in the chest. His shields drained. He quickly grabbed the alien and punched it in the face. John felt its skull cave in. He tossed the limp body off the vehicle. The swarm of Drones was cut down. The Phantom fired all its turrets at the Ripper. One hit the hood and the jeep burst into flames. John jumped out just in time before it exploded. The Ripper carried on moving until it slammed into a wall. John quickly hid behind a corner. Behind him a Wraith tank fired its Plasma Mortar. It arced gracefully into the air and detonated on the side of a building. It glowed brilliant white and then crumbled into fist sized bricks. Marines screamed as they fell to their deaths. John took out his Punisher and pulled the trigger. All four of the barrels started rotating and then screamed as hundreds of bullets flew towards the Wraith. Its armour quickly peeled away and within seconds it was reduced to just a pile of scrap. John slung the Punisher around his shoulder and took out his MA8B. He went back to the corner when a Locust landed next to him. The driver jumped out.

"Quick Chief, get in." he yelled. He ran to the corner and fired three rockets at the Phantom. All of its turrets fell off. He quickly fired at a group of Jackals and they all scattered. John climbed into the cockpit of the Locust. The door closed and he strapped himself in. he made sure the strap was tight and he pushed the button which said fly. He grabbed the joystick and manoeuvred it towards the Phantom. He fired the two chain guns and watched its shield drain. After he fired two missiles and it exploded in a ball of flames. John quickly turned it around and noticed a group of trapped Marines that were fighting off Covenant forces. Chief warmed up the chain guns and let loose a wave of lead. They cut through five Brutes. John launched

a missile and it detonated in the middle of them. The Marines gathered the ammo of the dead and then ran towards another group of ODSTS. John pushed the throttle to maximum burn and the Locust jumped forward. He kept the chain guns firing and he took down a dozens of Brutes. A Phantom appeared from nowhere behind him. Then another did. Then another. They got on each side of him and one more went in front of the Locust. He quickly hit the eject button and he was launched up into the air. A parachute came out of the chair and he slowly drifted down to the floor. On his COM Admiral Stanford's voice blared,

"Chief, you're almost there. Keep moving. There is a squad of Marines up ahead of you. Get to them and help them out. Then they will come with to the bunker. They must not take that bunker. That is directly on top of their co-ordinates they have been giving out for where the Ark is. Defend it at all cost Chief. I am uploading the positions of the bunker and the Marines. Stanford out." And the COM snapped off. Two blue NAV points appeared on his HUD. John sprinted forward towards the closest one. There was a group of eleven Marines holding off some Jackals. John zoomed in and took out three with three shots. He primed a Frag grenade and lobbed it into the air. It arced over and landed in the group of them and they all jumped out of the way. That was just enough time for the Marines to shoot them all down. John ran to them.

"Sir, Corporal Bennett, we could really use your help Sir. We got wounded and we have no radio." He told John.

"I'll see what I can do." He replied. He opened a COM to the Admiral, "Sir, we have wounded here. Requesting Evac for them." He asked, there was silence for three seconds and then the admiral spoke,

"Roger that Chief. Hold your position, Evac will be there in approximately twenty seconds." He told John.

"Yes Sir." And John turned off the COM. "OK. Evac is here in twenty seconds. Secure a perimeter around the wounded." He yelled at them. They moved in a circle formation around the seven wounded and three dead soldiers. There was a roar of engines and a Pelican with a red cross painted on the side landed. Five men dressed in blue clothing jumped out and grabbed the wounded. They placed them on board and injected each one of them. They then bought out stretchers and placed the dead on them. Once everyone was secure they took back off and flew back to base. John rounded up the Marines,

"Where is the quickest route to the Gazeeb Cover? I need to get there and I need your help." John asked Bennett.

"Get us a Battle Fortress and I'll get you there in no time at all." He told John.

"Ok." He set a channel for all UNSC personnel in a range of two-hundred meters. "Calling any UNSC personnel, this is Spartan 117 and I require a Battle Fortress. I need it at these co-ordinates, two-four-zero, does anybody read?" a voice replied,

"Yes Sir. I will be there in a minute. Over." In the background John could hear the sound of gunfire. John told everyone to get their stuff together and gather what weapons they could find. Thirty

seconds they had managed to scavenge; two Jackhammer rocket launchers, three Brute Shots, two Battle Rifles, eleven Plasma Pistols, sixteen Plasma Grenades and five Frag grenades. There was an explosion behind John and he fell to the ground. He got up and saw the Battle Fortress emerging from a hole in the wall. It pulled up and everyone got out.

"Here you go Chief. She's all yours. Come on. Lets go kill some squid heads." He yelled to the passengers. They cheered and they ran off. John climbed inside and found it was extremely roomy. First the SGT pressed a button on the display and a machine gun emerged on the roof. John climbed up and manned it,

"I want those two Jackhammers to be used." He yelled down the ladder to the Marines.

"Yes Sir." Two yelled.

"Punch it SGT." The Battle Fortress moved with surprising speed. On the way John saw demolished buildings, burning vehicles. Corpses littered the ground. Explosions were going off all around them. John noticed a pack of Brutes encircling a Marine. All of them held a Covenant Carbine and were pointing them at his head. The Marine was crying. John opened up with machine gun and the Brutes fell to the floor before they could even turn around.

"SGT, stop." John yelled. The BF stopped just next to the Marine, "Get in. we could use all the help we can get." And the Marine jumped in the back. Just then a couple of Longswords flew over Johns head. John saw two bombs drop out of their open hatches and fall to the ground. There was a mighty boom and he saw remains of Covenant troops and vehicles fly up into the air.

"Chief, we'll be there in two minutes." The SGT shouted. The BF ploughed through the remains of a Phantom and at least a dozen Wraiths. For the rest of the journey they encountered no resistance. They finally arrived outside the Gazeeb Cover. Wave after wave of Brutes and Jackals attacked the bunker but it managed to hold them off with Jackhammers, SN-44S Sniper Rifles and a dozen machine guns. The SGT drove towards the attack. Rockets fired from the portholes and blew clusters of enemies. A dozen Phantoms came in and dropped off squadrons of Brutes, Jackals and Drones. John fired the machine gun and more than fifty Drones dropped out of the air. The next Phantom that came dropped off three portable gun turrets along with ten Brutes.

"SGT, I'm getting out and going inside the bunker. Cover me." John yelled over the noise.

"Yes Sir." He replied. John jumped off the BF and someone else got in the machine gun. John sprinted for the entrance when a plasma bolt hit him squarely in the back of his head. He flew forward and smacked his head on the wall. His vision went blurred and he turned around. He saw the outline of a Brute. He fired his whole clip into the creature. It still kept on coming. It fired two more shots and Johns shields drained. John primed a Plasma Grenade and threw it. It hit the Brute squarely between his eyes. It howled with anger before exploding in a mist of blue. John got back up and ran up the stairs that were guarded by ten ODSTs and three gun turrets. John opened the heavy steel door and entered.

5. Inside The Shelter

**Chapter 5**

Location: Gazeeb Cover, UNSC Weapons and Vehicles Research Facility, Congo Basin.

John turned and locked the door behind him. Inside his light enhancers had to compensate for the darkness. It was crowded with Marines and ODSTs getting weapons and ammo. The room was full of wounded being treated by Medics. John opened a COM to Admiral Stanford,

"Sir, I have reached the Gazeeb Cover and I am waiting new orders."

"Roger Chief. Defend that bunker until reinforcements arrive. We have a squadron of Longswords attacking their cruiser and we have thirty inbound Pelicans with tanks, Rippers and ODSTs inbound to your position. Just hang tight. Stanford out." The COM went dead. John walked up two flights of stairs. He was looked at and he saw people whispering around him. He knew what they were whispering about too. Not many people have ever seen a Spartan. Most people were hocked by their bulky armour and their height. John just ignored them and continued to walk. When he reached a locked, steel door, he could hear the rattle of machine gun fire and the frustrated shouts of SGTs and Corporals. He banged twice and then waited. He heard two metallic bangs as the locks opened and an ODST waited for him,

"Who are you? I'm not allowed to let anybody in without proper identification." He asked. John didn't like him questioning him but he answered anyway,

"I am Spartan 117. I am here to help fend off the Covenant invaders. Permission to come inside." John replied. The ODST looked to his left and he moved aside to let John in.

John entered the room and everyone who wasn't shooting stopped and looked at him. They then returned to what they were doing. John quickly looked around at the room. There was a window and placed and the window were fifteen machinegun. There were seven snipers standing at the window along with five people with Jackhammers. John quickly ran to the window and zoomed in. there was Covenant everywhere. John fired at a Brute and it flinched at the impacting shot. It kept on coming until a machine gunner cut it down. A sniper from somewhere at the back of all the Covenant took out one of the machine gunners. John took his position and flinched because the trigger was extremely hot. The barrel was steaming. He pulled the trigger down and killed an advancing line of Jackals most of the bullets reflected off their energy shield but one bullet went through the notch that the shields had and the Jackals body fell over. The ones on either side of it tripped over its legs and arms. John took this opportunity to exploit there uncovered body. Just then a beam hit him and his shields drained fully and he was knocked back off his feet. A normal Marine would have been killed instantly by one of them shots but John's shields absorbed most of the shock. He quickly got back up and found a SN-44S Sniper Rifle lying on the ground. Beside it were five clips of ammo. So, plus the clip already in it, that meant he could take

out at least twenty-four Covenant. That number, however, was tiny compared to how many Covenant were charging towards them.

"Someone man that turret now!" He yelled and someone ran towards it, grabbed it and started firing. John zoomed in a saw seventeen Jackal snipers at the very back of the Covenant. John took out four with headshots. He reloaded and focused back on the snipers. He quickly took out another four. After he reloaded, he noticed that the others were running about with their weapons over their heads. He focused on the oncoming Brutes. He took one out with two bullets to the head. He then took out two Jackals. He reloaded again. He shot down four Jackals,

"Anyone got any Sniper ammo?" an ODST yelled,

"Here," John told him and tossed him his last two clips. John discarded the used rifle and picked up his MA8B. He took out the Punisher, unclipped the stand and placed it on the edge of the bunker and pulled the trigger. The barrels rotated and unleashed a wave of bullets. He saw Brutes drop and Jackals fall over, blood pouring from their side. There was a click and John took out the ammo belt and slid in a new one. He continued to fire but this time he focused on the incoming swarm of Drones. They dropped from the sky like flies. One fired a Needler and the crystalline shards caught an unlucky Marine in the face. He screamed and ran around. He then exploded in a cloud of purple smoke. John quickly shot all the Drones and they fell and landed on top of unlucky Jackals and crushed them. The Brutes just shrugged them off. The last Phantom dropped off a Wraith and two Ghosts.

"Rockets on the Wraith and the Ghosts now!" John yelled. Five rockets flew towards the Wraith and it exploded and sent metal flying everywhere crushing unfortunate Brutes and Jackals. The Ghosts sped forward. John shot the first and its armour peeled away like tinfoil before exploding. The second was hit by five more rockets and was launched in the air. It landed on two Jackals.

"Chief, the Longswords are inbound. You might wanna shield your eyes. The Pelicans won't be long either." The Admiral barked down the COM.

"Yes Sir." John replied. John set his light filters to the darkest point. He could hardly see anything. "Everyone cover your eyes. Our Longswords are going to deliver our friends a surprise." He yelled and everyone shielded their eyes and got behind a wall.

The Longswords rushed in and each dropped at least twenty bombs. There must have been at least thirty Longswords. As they detonated they let off a blinding flash. Even with his filters set he still had to close his eyes. The roar of their engines was reassuring. As they passed and the light dimmed down, there were nothing left but burning corpses and fires. The Pelicans then soared in. they quickly scanned the area for any survivors and when they saw there weren't any, they landed. The ODSTs jumped out and charged towards the bunker. Up in the sky, John saw the cruiser was covered with hundreds of little pinpricks of light.

"Chief, our boarding Pelicans have managed to unload sixty troops into the cruiser. They have successfully planted a bomb that will detonate in fourteen minutes. I want you to take out any remaining

Covenant forces her-." there was an explosion in the background followed by the sounds of gunfire. "Chief, get over here now." Then the COM was awash of static. He turned off the COM and ran outside. There was a Ripper there waiting for him. It was fully loaded. The driver got out and ran inside the bunker. John quickly hopped in and put his foot down. The Ripper's wheels spun as he turned it around. He quickly sped off. He passed hundreds of burning corpses. Three Phantoms flew in and dropped off more Covenant troops. The ODS in the passenger seat fired all four of its rockets towards the first Phantom and blew off its guns. The machine gunners ripped off the others guns and they landed on the ground with a crash. The Ripper jumped as John drove over a dead body. Locusts flew overhead patrolling the area. John's Ripper sped forward and in five minutes they were there. John ran into the Garage and past the empty vehicle slots. He then stopped in the Armoury. John dropped his Punisher and picked up a Shark. He also dropped the MA8B for two Dominators, one with explosive ammo and one with shredder. He also picked up silencers for them both.

John proceeded up the ramp cautiously towards the three flights of stairs. When at the bottom John scanned above himself with his Dominators. When he started to proceed he heard the rattle of rifle fire and another strange sound that he hadn't heard before. It was a squeal noise followed by a grunt. He quickly ascended and when he got to the source of the noise it was a room with Human blood leading into it. He leaned against the wall and leaned around the corner. There were four Spider like creatures, they looked disgusting; they had slime dripping from their mouths (what John thought was their mouths), they had four extremely thin legs, and one of them had a see through tube protruding from its stomach that was stuck into a dead marines gut. John could see blood and fat going into the spider like creature. John had only just noticed the web like covering on the walls. He quickly took a video feed and viewed the room when he noticed two Marines stuck onto the wall. They were still alive. They were moving. One of the aliens jumped onto one of them and its tube came out and impaled the Marine. He hung there limp as it sucked out its insides. John had to look away, he heaved. The things heard him and turned towards him and crawled at him. John quickly unloaded his Dominators in them. Two of them fell onto the ground; olive coloured blood splattered the floor. John primed a Frag grenade and lobbed it inside, he then quickly shut the door. There was a dull thud from inside. He raised his pistols and opened the door stealthily. The remains of the creatures were scattered on the floor. When John was sure it was clear he quickly entered and grabbed the Marine that was still alive. He pulled off the web and he fell to the floor gasping. John looked at the one next to him. He had a hole in his stomach from which blood poured. John checked his bio-signs but they were flat. He closed his eyes and checked the pile of bodies but there weren't any survivors. The Marine grabbed his MA8B rifle and his two silenced SMGs. John told him to follow him and keep him covered. He turned off the video feed and tried to contact the Admiral,

"Admiral, this is Master Chief. If you can hear this, stay where you are. I am in the building and approaching your position. If it means endangering yourself then don't reply." John shouted down the COM. He waited and then someone replied,

"Chief, this SGT Hudson. We are being attacked by some unknown enemy and a load of Brutes. The Admiral is alive but he's wounded. We need your help. They're getting through!" It broke off and there was gun

fire and screaming in the background. John heard the gunfire and it was directly above him.

John cautiously ascended the stairs. A Brute charged out of the room in front of him. It ran at him and he unloaded his Dominators into it. Behind the Marine fired his SMGs and it crumpled into a heap and fell down the stairs. It landed with a crack as its neck broke. John slammed two new clips into his weapons with a satisfying click. He walked forward, pistols raised and stood in front of the room where the Brute had run out of. The room was crawling with Covenant and these new spider things. At one side of the room was a pile of bodies. Both Human and Covenant, although there were far more Human bodies than Covenant. At the far end of the room was a door that was blocked off. It was covered in bullet holes. John whispered to the Marine,

"Don't do anything yet. Wait 'till I have thrown my grenades, then you throw yours. Then we both open fire. Got it?"

"Yes Sir" he whispered back. John came to the edge of the door; he took out his Shark, primed a Frag grenade, lobbed it in, then primed another and did the same. The Marine threw two in as well. John flung himself in the room and shot his four rockets in. he then jumped back out and the Marine unloaded his SMGs in their. After John had put in four new rockets he flung himself back. There was nothing moving. John took out his two Dominators again. John scanned the room. Nothing seemed to have survived the blast. He gave the Marine the signal to show that it was all clear. He came in. John thought to himself as he looked out the window at the Humans clearing up the remaining Covenant forces, just what his life would be like
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"CHIEF! HELP!" The Marine yelled. There was a spider climbing up his body. It reached his midsection and inserted its tube into him. He went limp and fell to the floor. The spider jumped off and headed for John. It leaped into the air at his face but he sent it flying with the butt of his Dominator. It landed on the wall and it received a face full of lead. It then fell to the floor. John rushed to the fallen Marine and shook him. He didn't respond. He checked his bio-signs. His heart was beating. Relief flooded John. He picked him up and draped him over his shoulder. John turned towards the door that was blocked off.

"Hello, anyone in there?" he asked

"Yes Sir. We are. Is that you Chief?" the voice replied.

"Yes, stand away from the barricade." He told them, John placed the wounded Marine on the ground. John smacked the barricade with his fist and shattered. Wooden planks fell to the floor along with iron bars.

On the other side were seven Marines, two ODSTs and the Admiral that was draped over an ODSTs shoulder.

"Sir, we really need to get out of here. We need to get to the nearest base, which is Niagara Falls. Morris, call in a Pelican, get us the hell out of here. And send off the data about these new creatures to Lord Hood, they could use them to board the Orbital Mac Guns." SGT Hudson.

"Yes Sir SGT." PVT Morris shouted. "Lord Hood this is Congo Basin HQ. We have Intel on a new Covenant species. Advised you take a look at these as they are highly dangerous and they could board your Orbital Mac Guns, copy?" he said into the radio.

"I copy. Receiving data files. Give me a minute." he replied.
"Affirmative, data received. Broadcasting to other gun stations. Is the Master Chief there?" he asked,

"Yes Sir I am." John answered.

"Chief, I need you to order the troops out there. I don't know what it was you did, but you managed to repel an entire Covenant platoon. That cruiser is going to blow in two minutes forty-nine seconds. You need to set up base defence, get back up here and deal with the Covenant. Truths ship has exited the system on an unknown vector. He could be anywhere. His fleet are still here and we need your help."

"Sir, yes Sir." John chanted.

"Niagara Base this is Congo Basin HQ, requesting five Pelican transports for wounded. We have lost our Medical Bay, over"

"Copy that Congo Basin. Transports arriving in five minutes." John picked up the wounded Marine and placed him on a chair in the Armoury. SGT Hudson and his men followed. John then ran down to the outside speaker control.

"Attention. All personnel to report to the Armoury for wounded Evac and for orders. Be there in three minutes." He yelled through the speakers and his voice echoed outside. John ran back to the Armoury.

6. A Reunion

**Chapter 6**

**Location: High Charity, Delta Halo.**

The Arbiter landed next to SGT Johnson. Fifteen Elites had set up a perimeter.

"Everybody, listen. I want five Elites to stay here and guard the GravLift, the rest of you will come with me to free the Covenant that are stranded in this building. If they are Drones, Jackals or Brutes. Slaughter them. They will pay for spilling out brothers' blood." Arbiter growled to everyone. The Arbiter ran for the stars that led into the building and everyone else followed. Inside it was misty, the air was stale and it smelt of decay and rotting flesh. The Arbiter levelled his Plasma Rifles because he detected movement around the next corner. He glanced around and found a group of Grunts hiding there. One of them looked up and saw The Arbiter,

"Look, The Arbiter has come to save us. Grunts, get up." He squealed and the others got up and towards them, "Arbiter, Flood in building. They kill many Grunts and Elites. But we then kill them. We has Hunters in there. We needs your help. Follow us. We show you." He

yapped and then ran away. The Arbiter followed him and he came to a stop n front of a door.

"It me, Pinmo, me have Arbiter and friends. We need to get in." he barked through the door. After a moment the door opened and a black Elite stood there in front of two Hunters with their weapons raised.

"Arbiter." He shouted in surprise. "Come in." and he stepped aside to let them in.

Inside there was a pile of dead Flood being burnt by Grunts with masks on. There were many wounded and some dead. By the window there were five plasma turret emplacements. The Hunters were discharging plasma bolts that illuminated the room.

"We need to get out of here. I have a cruiser overhead that will take us out of this parasite-ridden place. We must hurry." The Arbiter told him.

"Okay, let's go." He replied, "Everybody listen. We need to evacuate this building immediately before it becomes overrun with parasite. Get your gear and follow The Arbiter. He will lead the way out for us." Everyone then followed The Arbiter out of the room. The two Hunters shifted as they were shot by plasma. They retreated and followed everyone out of the room.

The Arbiter rounded a corner and moved on when two Carrier Forms dropped from up above followed by five Combat Forms.

"Open fire!" Arbiter yelled and he saw the bur marks appear on the nearest Carrier Form before it exploded. Infection Forms crawled all around. Arbiter stepped on three of them and all of them popped simultaneously. He shot one of the Combat Forms and its arms fell off and it fell. It crushed two Infection Forms. Plasma bolts sizzled past his head. The last Combat Form exploded as it was filled with crystalline needles. After he made sure it was clear, The Arbiter walked forward towards the top. SGT Johnson, however, had stopped and was looking at a bright purple light in the distance down a corridor. He ran down towards it and found a familiar figure.

"Hello SGT. How are you?" Cortanas smooth voice asked him,

"Ma'am. I'm just fine. I'll get you outta there." He told her. He pushed a few buttons on the projector unit and he put the data crystal in his pocket. He then returned to the group.

When The Arbiter had reached the roof of the building he stepped into the GravLift. He was followed by the Grunts, then the Elites, Johnson, Keyes and finally the Hunters.

"What now Arbiter?" Johnson asked him,

"Now, we go to Earth." He replied.

7. Unsuspected Stop

**Chapter 7**

****_Location: Congo Basin, UNSC Weapons and Vehicles Research Facility._****

John dropped his two empty Dominators and picked up a Shark. He also dropped his Punisher for a MA8B rifle. When all the Marines had gathered up around the table he placed miniature models of vehicles and infantry on the map.

"I want the Rippers, patrolling these areas here." He told the Ripper drivers and he pointed to four different places on the map. "I want the Locusts to patrol the perimeter of the base. I want the Lions to guard the Gazeeb Cover. I want 1st Squad inside the Gazeeb Cover along with twenty Medics, thirteen Snipers and I want the two Battle Fortresses to patrol there. The other BFs can patrol this area here. 2nd and 3rd squad patrol here. And 4th squad can stay in this building here. Are we clear?" John yelled.

"Sir, yes Sir!" they yelled back. And they all ran to their assigned posts.

John heard the roar of Pelicans outside and he helped the wounded to get there. There were five of them and John stepped into one. He manned the turret and once everyone was on board it took off. John saw hundreds of Marines and ODSTs cleaning up Covenant corpses that littered the ground. There was a big roaring fire that was burning all of the UNSC soldiers that had died during the fight. Locusts whizzed past his view. One of them was chasing an enemy Banshee and was ripping it to pieces with its two chain guns. Behind him he heard the moan of wounded. He looked around and saw that one of them had their stomach ripped open. The Medic was trying to stop the bleeding but was having no luck. The floor was covered in blood. John quickly turned back. He couldn't look anymore. Just then three Phantoms rushed by. They had a Wraith and two Ghosts attached to them. He quickly opened fire with the machine gun. The closest ones guns fell off but it continued heading towards the base. John opened the radio,

"Attention, you have three Covenant Phantoms approaching your position. They are loaded with vehicles. I have blown ones turrets but get your Rocketeers to take out the others before anyone approaches them. We can't afford anymore casualties. Do you copy?" John said down the radio.

"I hear you Chief. We can see them comin' in now. Well give 'em a warm welcome. Over" SGT Hudson's voice replied. John turned off the radio and went back to the turret.

"We have contacts!" the pilot shouted and eight more Phantoms flew past. John pulled the trigger and the closest ones Ghosts fell off along with a turret. John ran back to the radio,

"Base, this is Master Chief. You have eight more Phantoms approachi-." John stopped as seven more flew past, "Correct that. You have fifteen more approaching your position. There are bound to be more. Over"

"Chief. We need your help. They're everywhere. There shooting everyoâ€¦| AHHHHH!" and the radio became filled with static. Two Banshees then flew behind them and started to shoot at them. Their aim was really off target. John grabbed the turret and tore one to

pieces. The other however could come in useful. He told the pilot to increase the speed. John felt the ship lurch forward. So did the Banshee. John ran towards the ramp and leaped out. He landed on the Banshee with a thud. He grabbed onto the back of the hood and yanked it open. He shoved the Combat Knife into the back of the Brutes skull. He flung the limp body from the flier. He lay down in the cockpit and banked around. He came level to the nose of the Pelican. What he then saw made him freeze.

The cruiser that had been blown up had landed in the sea. Its bulbous section was still pointing out. But that wasn't it. It was the hundreds of oncoming Phantoms and Banshees that he was more concerned about. From a distance they looked like a swarm of flies. But that swarm kept on getting bigger until he could see them all clearly. The Banshees fired at the Pelicans and two of the transports burst into flames. They roared as they lost altitude. They landed in the sea and then sank. John fired his plasma cannons at the oncoming swarm. Two Banshees were set ablaze. One of them collided with a Phantom and sent it spinning out of control. They roared past John and his Banshee got blown back by the force. He quickly levelled it out though. He turned around and followed the swarm. He then opened a COM to Lord Hood.

"Sir, we need reinforcements now. There are approximately one hundred and fifty Covenant aircraft heading towards the Congo Basin." John yelled.

"Chief, this is Hood. They're already on the way. The Longswords I already sent are returning. And I have another thirty-two Pelicans on their way. The Pelicans have some Rippers on and some Lions. We were going to send them to you on Delta Halo for help but we figured you wouldn't need them you need them now so, here they are. There is a special surprise on the way as well. Hood out." And the COM snapped off. John pushed the boost button and tried to catch up with the on going convoy that, if it reached Congo Basin, would surely wipe them out. The Longswords and Pelicans had better hurry up, he thought to himself.

He rushed through a patch of trees, swerving and rolling and banking until he reached Congo Basin. It was hell. Fires were going off, buildings were exploding and Marines were screaming and dying. John fired his cannons towards a cluster of Jackals. He saw them die and there skin started melting from the heat. John then quickly landed, got out and walked to the nearest corner. Around there were two Wraith tanks shooting at the Living Quarters. Within seconds the building exploded, showering John with bits of dust and bricks. He took out his Shark and blew the first one to bits. He sprinted for the second one and jumped on top. He belted the Brutes head with his Combat Knife and fleshy bits fell out of his skull covering John with purple blood. John hauled the body out and dropped it off the tank. He got in and the hatch sealed. He hovered forward towards a group of ODSs. They all followed him and he led them towards the Gazeeb Cover. He took out a Phantom with six consecutive bursts from his mortar. It landed on the Brutes and spiders it had just unloaded, crushing them. It exploded in a ball of flame. John turned towards the oncoming Ghosts. Seven of them all fired their Plasma turrets. John fired his turrets and launched a mortar at them. Three of them got caught in the blast and two got blown up by his turrets. The last two were blown up by the ODSs. John hovered over to the next Wraith and he launched three mortars, each impacted on it and created a

blossom of illuminate blue light. When the light had cleared the Wraith had vanished from sight. But it was replaced with a swarm of the spider like creatures. John activated the turrets before they could move. More than half of them were burned up but five were still coming. The ODSs opened fire and two of them fell. The last three jumped at the ODSs. One was knocked out of the air by ones gun and it flew into the wall and slid down it, leaving a trail of oozing green blood. The two that survived had already shoved their tubes through the ODSs armour and were sucking them dry. One man tried to grab one off them but it sprung out and the tube hit him and impaled his face. Blood oozed from his eyes and he fell to the floor. One man shot it and its bones broke through its skin before it slid off the fallen ODSs sideways. The last creature was shot and then stamped on until its head popped. Green blood and a fleshy bag poured out over the floor. One person turned away and threw up. John moved the Wraith forward again.

He got out and then three Banshees attacked him. His shields drained and he had to dive behind cover. A Fuel rod cannon flew into the ODSs and sent them flying. One landed next to John and he was clutching at a leg that wasn't there anymore. He was screaming with pain. John aimed for the closest banshee and fired a rocket at it. It blew into pieces. The next rocket hit the other ones wing; it spiralled out of control before slamming into a building. The last fired its plasma cannons and John had to dive out of the way to avoid getting burnt. He turned around the corner to find that the Banshee was lying on the ground. John looked at it. He then walked over to it, but there was no-one in it. He heard a roar from behind him and there was a Brute, charging at him. John fired a rocket at it and it blew into strips of flesh. John ran back to the wounded Marine but he was lying on the floor motionless. His bio signs were flat lined. John hurried to the Wraith and got in it.

He moved forward taking out more Brutes and Jackals until he eventually came towards the Gazeeb Cover. It was burning and there were craters the size of cars in it. Just then the Longsword squadron swooped around blowing stuff up. John saw one that had just crashed. He ran to it and found the pilot dead. Luckily the Longsword was still working. He jumped in the driver's seat and strapped himself in. He hit the control for take off and he hovered in the air until he could move. He pulled the joystick and he arced up into the air. He found a Phantom that was shooting at a Ripper. John flew above it and dropped a YUH-89 bomb onto it. It was engulfed in flame and fell to the ground and exploded, killing everything that was underneath it. John quickly flew around looking for Covenant. Then he saw a mass of Brutes and spiders heading towards the Gazeeb Cover he flew over them and dropped a bomb. He was shot and he had an engine failure. Behind him was an enemy Phantom. He hit the eject button and he was flung into the air. He landed on top of the Phantom. He found a grip and dug his gauntlet into it. He then dropped down to its GravLift. He swung himself inside. Despite the force pushing him out, he managed to grab onto something and haul himself in. when he was inside he encountered two Brutes and a Jackal. The Phantom was much more roomier than it looked. He flung a Plasma Grenade at the closest Brute and ran into the other and they were both covered with luminous blue light before exploding. John took out his MA8B and shot the last Jackal in the head. He headed towards an archway and through there was the cockpit. There was a single Brute in there. John crept up behind him and stabbed him in the neck with his knife. He fell to the floor howling. John quickly stamped on his head and put an end to his

pain. The Phantom swerved violently. John ran back to the GravLift and jumped out. He landed on the floor and managed a roll so as he wouldn't become injured. He looked up and saw the Phantom race into another Phantom. They both fell to the floor and exploded. John turned around and two Ghosts came boosting at him. He launched his MA8B Grenade Launcher at the closest one. The Grenade ripped straight through it. It swerved off and hit a wall. John shot five bursts at the oncoming one. He then jumped up in the air; he landed on the hood and booted the driver in the face. The Brute was sent flying and John jumped in the driver's seat. He launched the plasma cannons at the brute and one tore through him. He fell to the floor and was thrashing about until he stopped and lay motionless. John boosted over to a Battle Fortress. He signalled the driver to stop. Once it had stopped moving John climbed aboard the machine gun.

There were dead Marines scattered over the floor. A spider creature was lying on the ground with its tube stuck in an ODST, John fired at it and it got shredded into ribbons. The BF rumbled slowly forward. They drove straight the biggest Covenant gathering John had ever seen. He fired the machine gun until his hands burnt. Rockets and bullets flew out of the portholes. The BF was shot and had grenades stuck on it but it still held. They drove straight through it and John got shot twice. He had to drop down the ladder to let his shields recharge. Plasma slashed at the air. Rockets exploded and sent bodies flying. The yell and growl from Brutes and Jackals. Drones filled the air and they dropped like flies as John cut them up, he aimed for a Banshee and it got caught by his machine gun. Its wings blew off and it arced up and nosed into an unfortunate Brute. His entrails were smeared across the floor. John then hopped off and found a Ripper. He got in the drivers seat and drove towards a group of Marines. Two hopped onto the machine guns, and one with a Shark hopped in next to John. He sped off.

The two Marines were firing like crazy. They managed to take down at least thirty Jackals and two swarms of Drones. ODSTs flew into air because they were hit by a Wraith. Flaming vehicles littered the ground. John turned around the next corner and saw a pair of Hunters fending off three Jackals and two brutes. John told the gunners to only shoot the brutes and Jackals. They tore through the Jackals shields and their bodies fell to the floor. The brutes were then ripped apart by the Hunters Fuel Rod guns. John thought that this must be the surprise although he still keyed a COM to Lord Hood,

"Sir, this is Master Chief. I have just found two Hunters. Are they on our side or theirs?" John asked down the COM

"They are now on our side. A Covenant ship has just entered our space and it was full of Elites, Hunters and Grunts. We were going to shoot but we intercepted a message from Truth. He said that the Heretics, the Hunters, Elites and Grunts, had invaded High Charity. It said that they were being led by someone called The Arbiter. You'll just have to trust them for the moment. They could be the thing we need to turn the war in our favour. What exactly are they doing?" he asked.

"They are fending off Brutes and Jackals." He replied.

"Well then. Trust them." And the COM snapped off. John drove past the Hunters and carried on back towards the Gazeeb Cover. He came back to

it and he ran over two Jackals and hit a Brute. The Brute flew into a Ghost and sent it flying into the wall. It exploded and killed two unfortunate Jackals that got in its way. John quickly turned to give the passenger a better angle on an incoming Banshee, he launched two rockets and the flier was engulfed in flames. He then fired at two Brutes who were firing at the bunker. Just then a Phantom passed overhead. It had something new on it. It was like a massive claw that hovered. It turned to a Battle Fortress and it released a massive blue spear of energy. It flew towards it and it glowed bright yellow then exploded. John quickly told them to concentrate all fire on that machine. Another Phantom came and dropped another one off. One turned directly to John. He pushed down on the pedal just before he could fire and the spear missed him by meters. The ground where it had struck now had a crater the size of a Scorpion tank. John swerved in and out of debris of Banshees and burning corpses. He hit a rock and the jeep flipped over. He quickly got back to it and grabbed the frame. He pulled it and eventually it tipped over. The ODSs got back in. John manned a machine gun this time though. He told the driver to patrol the Gazeeb Cover. They needed to protect it at all costs. They set off and John spotted a group of Grunts led by five Elites. They had their swords out and were slicing the Brutes in half. He helped them by pulling the trigger and cutting them up. The Grunts that wore green armour ran to the front of the bunker and set up turrets there. They started firing at the Covenant. The Elites ran up to a group of Marines, who stepped away but then, came back as they started to shoot a swarm of Drones. They all ran off towards a gathering of spider creatures. John yelled at the driver who was focusing on the new members of their side rather than watching the road. He skidded into the wreckage of a downed Phantom and the vehicle rolled over. John looked up through the dust and heard the Phantoms engines still humming. He ran towards the GravLift and beckoned the Marines over. They ran towards him.

"Climb into the lift and when you get in there clear it and I shall be behind you." John told them. They climbed up the upside down Phantom and dropped in. they disappeared very quickly. John followed.

He landed on the roof of the Phantom. He got up and looked around,

"Looks all clear Chief." the ODS said. John ran over to the pilot's room and swept it. It was clear. He told everyone to hold on to something and he tapped one of the holographic controls. The engines whined and the turrets heated up. On the display it showed that one of the turrets was disabled. He ignored it and flew up and over the Gazeeb Cover. He fired the turrets and each plasma bullet found a target. They burned holes through Jackals and it blew up a Spectre. The Brutes commandeering it flew into the air and slammed into the wall. John turned the vehicle around and flew to a group of Marines. He opened up the GravLift while still firing and they all jumped aboard. He flew to the nearest cluster of Brutes who were advancing towards the bunker. He opened up with the turrets and stopped them dead in their tracks. He then flew towards three Wraith tanks who were holding up against three squads of ODSs. He placed the GravLift on top of them and the ODSs jumped out on top of them. They grabbed the hatches and clubbed the drivers to death. Suddenly, an alarm went off and a picture of eleven fuel rod missiles came into view and they were heading for him. He yelled at everyone to get out. He made sure the ship was empty and was knocked off his feet as the missiles

impacted. His stomach lurched as the ship spiralled out of control. He was forced to the edge of the ship and he couldn't move. He braced himself for impact and he was thrown forward. His vision became blurred and he then blacked out.

8. Reluctant Alliance

**Chapter 8**

**Location: Cairo Station Gun Platform.**

The Arbiter stepped out onto the cold metal floor of the Human station. He looked around and saw that dozens of fires were being extinguished and that corpses were being lifted off in black bags there stood a very authoritative figure in front of him. He was surrounded by five other Humans each with scoped machine guns. He stood there staring at the man until SGT Johnson said something.

"Lord Hood, this is The Arbiter. He bought us home in those shit heaps they call spaceships. I also found this sir." He said and he handed him Cortana.

"Thank you Johnson. You and Keyes may proceed to the Mess Hall and get whatever you need. I want to speak to The Arbiter." He said and Johnson and the left him with a grim face. "First of all, if your forces are going to be on this station," he said with a bitter edge to his voice, "I don't want any of your aliens attacking my men. Second, I want to know who the hell are you and why you have all of a sudden left the Covenant."

"We left the Covenant because our Prophets betrayed us and spilt our brothers' blood. I can also guarantee that no harm will come to your men," He replied, "I am The Arbiter, will of the Prophets. The destruction of the first Halo was, according to them, my error. They then gave me a chance to redeem myself by becoming The Arbiter. I will help you to stop the Prophet and stop them from activating The Ark that is located on Earth. Your Demon killed one of our Prophets and he was doing Truth a favour. He wanted him dead so that he could rule the Covenant with ultimate supremacy." He told Lord Hood.

"Right, I want you to get your troops battle-ready because there is a fight going on down at the surface. The Covenant are overrunning the Ark and we are failing. The "Demon" is down there trying to take every last one of them suckers to hell with him. If you're lucky, you might just catch him." He said with a smirk on his face, "Some of your troops will be taking the Pelicans down there and some in Phantoms. If anything goes wrong just radio me with this Portable Microphone Radio. Just press this button here and I will be on the other end." He said,

The Arbiter looked out at the raging battle and replied,

"I will get there as soon as I can. The last of the Phantoms are landing on this station as well. I over heard one of your men saying about how they could get new technology from our ships, so please, feel free." and he walked off to his Elites and Grunts.

"Kimju, go and get the Hunters into the Phantoms," he roared and a small orange-armoured Grunt ran off "I want everyone here who is fit for battle to get ready and get into the Phantoms, leave the Engineers here as the Humans will need them. Everyone ready?" he yelled and he received the roars and squeals of Grunts and Elites. They all ran off towards Phantoms and hopped inside their GravLifts. Arbiter saw the Ghosts and Spectres suspended in midair below them. Then the Hunters came charging in and stopped under the transports. They were then lifted off the ground and into the belly of the ships. The Arbiter ran to the nearest one and hopped in. Inside everyone was seated. The four Hunters were held in place. The Grunts were seated and the Elites had a glowing belt around them. He gave the word to lift off and he got a glowing belt and put it around himself. He then felt the ship take off and through the view screen all the others followed them into the black of space.

The Arbiter's Phantom swerved in and out of molten slag of the UNSC ships and Covenant vessels debris. All around there was plasma fire that was trying to hit down their Phantoms. One unlucky Phantom was caught by one and it ripped a hole straight through it. Arbiter watched as the atmosphere and pressure was sucked out and his troops floated lifeless in space. His Phantom nudged a chunk of metal out of its way and continued towards Earth. They entered the atmosphere of the planet and the inside of the ships heated up rapidly. The ship shook violently and Arbiter gripped one of the handles above him. Through the radio The Arbiter barked,

"Ninety-four units until we land. Everyone get ready." And he checked his weapons. His two Plasma Rifles were still in their holsters and his Energy Blade was stored away safely. He also carried seven Plasma Grenades and a Plasma Mine, these mines were new and he thought that they would come in handy for their Wraiths. As they came over the Gazeeb Cover he noticed that it was hell. Flaming corpses littered the ground. Buildings were being demolished by Wraiths and grenades, Brutes were tearing apart prisoners for sport. They neared the top of the odd looking building that Truth was after and his troops unloaded onto the top. In the distance The Arbiter saw, what he thought was, the Demon slaying a group of Brutes with his vehicle. As he jumped out the Phantom took back off and vanished up into the atmosphere. The other thirty-four Phantoms did the same. The Pelicans came in, landed, unloaded all of the Elites and what the Humans call, ODSTs, and then took back off. Arbiter was greeted by the fire from a swarm of Drones. He returned fire and they fell to the floor. Everyone jumped off the building and formed a perimeter around the structure. Plasma Cannons were assembled at specific places. Arbiter jumped into a Spectre along with three other Black clad Elites. He moved the hovering vehicle around the bunker and to the entrance. He then spotted a trio of Wraiths pummelling a building that looked like barracks. He shifted the vehicle over there and the gunner and passengers opened fire. The main guns bullets just rebounded off the Wraiths thick armour plating and flew off into the distance. The Plasma Rifles from the passengers hit it and its armour began to bubble. Arbiter saw a way to expose one of them in a way where the gunner could hit its engines. He strafed the vehicle around the tank and told the black Elite to focus fire on the exposed grey of the tank. He did that. He must have hit an important cable or something because the tank burst into flames and the Brute jumped out running around until a passenger shot him. Now aware of The Arbiters presence, the other Brutes turned around and opened up. Their small plasma turrets burnt the vehicle and he saw its purple plating begin

to melt away. He turned around and boosted to a nearby mound of dirt. There was a loud explosion as one of the Wraiths exploded. He wondered what had made it blow up. Then he heard the other blow up as a Phantom flew over his head. He emerged from cover and then boosted the vehicle towards a nearby building. It was still intact and he stopped outside it. He jumped out of the Spectre and was greeted by a pack of Jackals. He jumped behind the vehicle for cover as the gunner mowed them down with a well aimed plasma spray. When he made sure that they were dead he advanced. One of the passengers had got into the drivers seat and had drove off leaving him there on his own.

As he entered the building he smelt a putrid stench. One that was all too familiar. He got prepared to face what ever came his way. He activated his portable light and proceeded.

He wound his way through a maze of passageways and turns. He encountered little resistance apart from three Brutes and seven Jackals. The stench got worse the further he got to the top of the building. Human and Covenant bodies littered the floor. His light then came to rest on something that made him freeze. It was a severed arm of a parasite. He looked at it and it was different to the normal Flood forms. It was more like a Brute's arm, only it was decaying and it was tinged with green fungus. He jumped up as he heard a squelching around him. He turned around but there was nothing. It then came from behind him, but when he turned, there was nothing. Suddenly, he was flung forward with such force that his vision went black for a few units. He quickly recovered his focus and turned to face what had hit him to the ground. It was a Flood form, but a hardly recognisable Brute. Its arms had been replaced with tentacles as thick as tree stumps. Its fur had either come off or it was just covered with all of the rot on its body. He pulled the triggers as it charged again. The bullets seemed to have no effect on it. It carried on coming even though holes were being burnt through it. He managed to jump out of the way just in time as it slammed into the wall trying to hit him. It recovered, leaving large dents imprinted in the wall. When it turned around its face had been completely removed. On the wall were blood and entrails. All that was left now was an exposed skull of it. The Arbiter took the chance to draw his Energy Blade and ram it through its throat. There was a brief moment when the monster went limp, but then suddenly re-awakened. He tore out the blade and carried on hitting it until its arms and a leg had been sliced off. it writhed on the ground still until Arbiter rammed the blade, a final time, through its head. He left the body there and ran back down the stairs. He encountered another two of the beast. A well placed plasma grenade blew one of them to bits and another sent the other flying through the window. He ran down to the entrance and used his new PMR to Lord Hood.

"Yeah Arbiter. What is it?" Lord Hood's voice crackled with static.

"We have a major problem. There is a building down here that has Flood life forms inside it. They are not just the UNSC and Elites but they are also Brutes and are extremely dangerous. Requesting air support to destroy the building. Sending coordinates now." He replied. Anxiously looking around for signs that any had got out.

"OK Arbiter. Help is on the way and will be there in approximately three minutes. Get your men as far away from there as possible. Hood

out." And the radio clicked off. He ran down the steps and checked to see if any of his troops were there. When he saw no-one he sprinted for the closest Ghost he could find. He hopped into it and it was still operational. He activated the boost and he sped away from the building. Then three Longsword bombers sped over him and dropped two bombs each on to the building. He turned around and saw debris fly into the air. Suddenly he was knocked off balance. He skidded into a course with a wall and he managed to bail just in time before it exploded. He turned around and was staring into the eyes of a Flood Combat Form.

PVT Machin was running low on ammo as he poured a clip from his SMG into a Jackal. The warrior went down in a heap. The steps to the Gazeeb Cover were littered with the bodies of Covenant. Behind him the crack of a sniper rifle boomed over the base. A Brute fell from the shot. He ran behind the cover of a wall and got five more clips from the big stack of boxes that were piled up against the wall and ran back to the stairs.

"Yeah! You like that! Here, have some more!" he yelled as he filled the sky with a hail of bullets and hit at least thirteen Drones. They fell onto the floor with a sickening thud. There was a scream from behind him. He turned around only to get smacked to the floor. He wiped a trickle of blood from his left eye and saw a monster in front of him. He reached out for his SMG when he was smacked again into the wall. His left arm was broken and he tried to reach his SMG once again. This time he got it. He emptied a clip into the monster but it still carried on coming. Without his left arm he couldn't reload so he tried to move away when it picked him up and punched him in the stomach. He looked down and saw his entrails falling onto the floor. The beast grabbed both his arms and pulled. The pain was intense and he screamed as one of his arms was torn from the socket. Just then another monster appeared. Warm tears trickled down the PVTs face as they closed in on him. The last thing he saw was a foot descending rapidly onto his face.

Arbiter jumped to the side just in time to dodge a tree trunk like arm swing through the air. He ran. Whilst he was running he turned around and fired his rifles at it. They left skin melting and two managed to break through its flesh leaving it with a bubbling hole through its chest. After continuous fire the beast went down. He carried on running and turned on the PMR,

"Hood, I have just found Flood outside the building. If we don't do something they will get out of here and spread." He yelled. He was answered by static, "Hood, Hood can you hear me?"

"Arbiterâ€¦ stop them frâ€¦ getting off the islâ€¦ Earâ€¦ ends on itâ€¦" there was an almighty explosion in the background and the radio was awash with static. He turned it off, prayed for the lost brothers aboard that platform, and was glad that others had been sent to twenty-six other platforms. At least his race was not all gone, for the moment. He couldn't stop to mourn so he rushed to the nearest vehicle, which was a Human behemoth that they called Sharks. He hopped in and pushed the throttle to the max. He aimed at a Spectre that had Flood in it and he punched the missile button. The tank shook and the Spectre was sent flying into the air in a mix of limbs, fire and metal. He turned the turret towards a small pile of debris and broken vehicles that was blocking his way to the bunker. He blew it up. After the smoke cleared he was about to move forward but it

was still there. He wondered what the second button would do. He pressed it and was rewarded by a smaller missile to come launching out of the tube. It cleared the way but that was the last one, so he had to stick to normal ones for now. After three uneventful minutes there was an explosion just in front of The Arbiter. He stopped just before the cloud of dust and smoke. He then got out seeing what had made the explosion. He steadied his aim and edged towards it. When it had cleared there were two Pelicans with no wings sticking nose first into the ground. Their wings had been blown off and the cargo bay had come loose as weapons and ammo had been scattered all over the place. He strode over to it to see if anyone survived. He peered into the dusty compartment and three bodies were moving, trying to break free from the wreckage. He stepped in and lifted a metal bar off one's chest and helped him up. One had his leg trapped under an ammo box and it appeared to be broken. The last one was lying down trying to get up from underneath three corpses. After he had helped them out one told him about a vehicle that they had found underneath one of their Phantoms. He looked outside and saw that it had flipped on its side. He grabbed one end of the frame and hauled it back over onto its normal side. Its purple coat shone bright in the sun. It was a new Spirit that the Prophets had been talking about. It carried up to seven troops in it and had a powerful auto cannon on the front and a cannon on the back that was manned by a passenger. He helped the wounded into the bay and found it was much roomier than it looked. The well ODST jumped into the back cannon and touched a switch that made it glow purple. After the last one had got in he went to check the last Pelican. There were no signs of movement in there so he went back to the Spirit. He jumped through the door and grabbed the joystick. The machine floated off the ground and it sped forward, looking for more wounded, and a medical wing.

No sooner had he turned the first corner, than he ran into a pack of berserk Brutes. The auto cannon burnt an enormous hole through the leading one and sliced off one's leg. He touched a button on the holographic panel and it sped forward, knocking the Brute off its feet and crushing him against a wall. He reversed and the body dropped, leaving entrails down the wall. He carried on moving and he encountered no enemy forces for some time until he neared the bunker. There forces that had been deployed were fighting a losing battle and were being slaughtered by both Flood and Covenant. The cannon fired at three Jackals and they fell to the floor. The back cannon roared as it discharged heat and energy at a swarm of Drones. A pair of Hunters rounded the corner, their Fuel Rod guns glowing green with energy and then discharged it at an enemy Phantom. It rolled over and spiralled out of control into the floor. A Brute managed to get a grenade stuck to a portable Plasma Turret. The Grunt ran off but was caught by the blast and its lifeless body hit an Elite in the stomach. The Spirit came to a stop and the Humans unloaded, letting seven gold clad Elites in. Once they were all in he drove off, hoping to flank the attack. He managed to get behind them and they all unloaded. They stealthily advanced and caught a pair of Jackals unaware. They were quickly put down by their blades. After turning another corner he ran into a dozen Brutes with three Spectres. He told everyone to activate their Active Camouflage and board each vehicle. He then activated his and ran towards the closest of the assault vehicles. He waited for it to slow down just before it turned and he hopped on the back and threw the Brute out of the gun. The driver then went flying along with the other two passengers. The vehicle was useless and he manned the plasma turret and looked around. He put down the nearest Brute and the one next to it was

suddenly cut in two as an Energy Blade sliced through its mid-section. The rest were easy prey. Unable to see their attackers they stumbled about. One vehicle tried to get away when its driver was yanked from his seat and found a foot embedded in its face. Arbiter aimed the turret at the vehicle and it disappeared in flames. As he jumped out of the turret he was faced with a new threat as dozens of Flood forms poured out of a nearby building,

"The Flood has reached the surface. Attack!" an officer yelled. Several Brute forms charged but were knocked off course with some well placed Plasma Grenades. A Carrier form popped spewing Infection forms everywhere. One found a Veteran Elite and hopped on his face. He fell down screaming. He then stopped. Arbiter's arms were shaking because of the recoil from his rifles. He steadied his aim and took down three Combat forms and a Brute form. After they had all fallen The Arbiter and his team carried on towards the bunker. They neared a corner as three Phantoms flew over his head. They each carried a digging machine that he recognised from the Human planet Reach. This couldn't be good. They use them to level land quicker than any other machine he knew of. He motioned his team to run. They ran into a pack of Jackals but they were put down silently and swiftly. After six units of un-eventful running they neared the bunker. The drill of the machinery echoed through the base. He peered round a corner and found that the bunker had disappeared. The machines were quickly digging a hole further down into the Earth. He told his team to activate their ActiveCamo and take out the Brute patrols. Having activated his he ran for the nearest Brute.

He crept up on it and he rammed his blade through its stomach. It grabbed at thin air until it stopped. Two other Brutes turned to see what the noise was but when they started to yell they hung in midair and fell silent. Arbiter dragged his limp body and dumped it in the shadows. He was followed by six other floating bodies. There were only three more patrols left. Three of the Elites ran out and came back dragging limp bodies with them. Just then a Phantom flew over head and fired on their position. He ducked for cover but was caught by a plasma bullet. His shield drained and he waited for it to recharge. The Phantom dropped off ten Brutes, fifteen Jackals and twenty-nine Scalars. They started to fire and a Red Elite disappeared from the midsection down. He howled and tried to crawl out of the way but was shot in the head. Arbiter opened fire and three Scalars split in two as his bullets tore through them. The Brutes were taking position behind the Jackals and they raised their shields. Arbiter lobbed a Plasma Grenade and it attached itself to a Brute's arm. He howled and was engulfed in blue light followed by a thunderous bang. Jackals scattered and the other Brutes ran for cover. Scalars just seemed to pour out of everywhere. After seventy-eight units of Cat and Mouse shooting the fighting finally stopped. With three more of his squad dead, The Arbiter's team was down to four troops. He looked back towards the gaping hole and found that it was swarming with Scalars and Jackals. There were ramps that led down to the bottom of it and he could see a glowing orange light at the bottom. He magnified his vision and he found it to be at least ninety times deep. Just then behind him, thirty-two Elite Personal Entry Pods landed behind him. He levelled his rifles and waited for the nearest EPEP to burst open. He lowered his weapons when he noticed it was Oslee'yun. Behind him twenty Phantoms dropped in, each carrying three portable Plasma Turrets and seven weapons crates. They each dropped off Grunts, Minor, Major and Pilots, Elites, Rookie, Veterans and Spec-ops and four Hunters each. Oslee'yun walked up to

Arbiter,

"Another one of our ships came into Earth space. It was filled with Rouges, well, that is what they called themselves, and they requested permission to dock. It was filled with fifty-seven Seraph fighters and sixty-two Phantoms. The others have been kept in space for Board&Destroy action. The battle is going in our favour. They have approximately one-hundred and seventy ships left. Soon it will all be over."

"I don't think so. Look over there" he said gesturing to the hole. It had already been secured with a few old Shades around the top. The Covenant were still inside though. "We need some snipers to take most of them out and then we use the Phantoms to shoot down there wiping them out." He yelled. Sixteen green armoured Elites came forward with new weapons. They were curved with a sharp tip at the end of them. The trigger was behind a huge scope. He grabbed one from the weapon crates and took it to the hole. He looked through the zoom and found it had different settings. He touched a button and it went to thermal vision. Then to night vision. And finally back to normal. He liked it. He turned to thermal, because it was the easiest to view the enemy, and aimed at a Jackals unprotected head. He pulled the trigger. Instead of the soft _poof_ of the Jackals rifle, this had more force. It let out a bang and the Jackal ended up with no head. Other bangs went off around him and he saw Scalers and Jackals fall without limbs or heads. One Jackal had a hole torn straight through its torso. After ten units of sniper work the bottom of the pit looked clear for now. He and Oslee'yun stepped up to a glowing rope each and took hold. It glowed brightly and then settled as it made their hands stick to it. They both jumped off and slid down. The Arbiter was not just worried about the Covenant just finding it, but more so the Flood. If they got down here they would be near impossible to stop. And as he dived into the bottom of the pit, the hum of machinery filled his ears.

9. The Near End

**Chapter 9**

Location: The Arc, Earth, Africa.

John woke up, his head was pounding. He looked around and saw winking lights flashing all around. He felt strange, like he was lighter. He then realised that both his arm armour joints were missing. He looked for them and saw them on a table. _Funny? Why aren't there any guards?_ He thought to himself. He tried to move but he was bounded by energy beams. There was a tunnel that was glowing orange. He wondered where it led. If he got out he start to move that way. Just then there was movement, followed by the groan of a Brute through the tunnel. He pretended to be unconscious. He opened his eyes just a little so he could see and he saw sixteen Elites enter the chamber. One walked over to him and tapped a button. The energy barrier vanished. John opened his eyes and sat up. An Elite passed him one of his arms placements; he placed it over his arm and welded it on. He did the same with the other. It felt good to be back with his armour. He stood up and flexed his muscles. He was aching from head to toe. Everyone was looking at him,

"Where the hell am I and who are you?" he asked the closest one that

had different armour than the others,

"I am The Arbiter. And we are near the portal that will lead the Covenant to The Arc. You must be the Demon?" he asked, John nodded.

"What's the situation?" he asked the tall creature that was stood in front of him.

"The Covenant have managed to dig down to the point where the Portal Du Humy lies. We need to enter the portal and fight off any Covenant that there may be there. Then I will call for reinforcements and we shall secure The Arc and defend it from any Covenant attackers. I have a group of six Hunters waiting through that tunnel. They will escort us to the portal and follow us in." He replied.

"Huh, I thought it would have been complicated." John mocked.

"We also have new data on the Covenants new recruits, they are called Scalpers. They are spider like creatures that keep themselves alive by eating the insides of another being." He informed him. John was longing for a chance to crush one with his hands after seeing what they had done to one of the ODSTs. He looked around for a weapon and found his MA8B and two Dominators lying on the table next to him. He picked them up, checked if they were loaded and clicked the safety off. He levelled the two pistols and followed The Arbiter through the tunnel.

After meeting up with the six Hunters John felt comfortable. He had seen what these beasts could do and was glad that they were now on their side. He had seen them flip Warthogs and Scorpions out of their way. They did lack intelligence though. They seemed to charge at anything, whether it was a bigger threat than them. He just hoped that they could cope with the Brutes. He silently followed watching for movement. Grunts squealed and the Elites barked at them. After passing through endless amounts of tunnels they came to an archway and through it there was a bright room. John would have thought it pretty had it not been covered in Brutes, Scalpers and Jackals. He turned around and looked at The Arbiter.

"What do we do?" John asked him.

"Hunters, you wait until I give the order and fire at anything that moves. Grunts, you set up the turrets. Elites, you will back the Grunts and pour continuous fire on their position. When they run, we will charge in and clean up. Any questions?" he whispered. "Good. Get into positions." He said and Grunts scuttled to their posts, Hunters crouched behind their shields and the Elites readied their rifles. John stood by The Arbiter and took out his MA8B; he pushed a grenade into the launcher and clipped it back. He put his sight on the commander looking Brute that was barking at the Drones through all of the commotion, boxes being moved and weapons being tested.

"FIRE!" The Arbiter yelled. John pushed the side button and his trigger. He felt the recoil and went temporarily deaf through all the noise. The Hunters cannons glowed green and emitted a charge of high temperature energy that burnt holes through Drones and Jackals. The turrets whined as they were pushed to the limits. Scalpers burned on the floor, Brutes were grabbing at gaping holes in their stomachs and Jackals were screaming and falling like flies. The enemy returned

fire and plasma burned the air by Johns head. He heard a Brute yell,

"They must not interfere with the Prophets holy work. Slay them!" he yelled. John pushed the release button and slammed a fresh clip into his weapon. He used up the clip and he put in a new one and a grenade. He fired at a group of Drones that were closing in. He cut them out of the air and their limp bodies fell to the floor. He then used the grenade on five Brutes that were hiding behind the wreckage of two exploded boxes. The whole battle lasted five and a half minutes.

When they had checked the room was clear they stationed three turrets looking over the door, and they left five Grunts and three Elites to watch the portal. The portal glowed a bright yellow, then it turned to red, then orange, then blue, then back again. On the side of it were some markings. It appeared to be Covenant language. Arbiter read it out,

"Those who step through this portal are destined to change the course of the future. The journey is dangerous and those who try it may never come back. You have been warned. Come on then." He said to the others, "lets go." And he walked into the portal. He disappeared into thin air. John followed him.

John felt as though he was being sucked into darkness. He couldn't see anything even with his torch on. He kept his arms tucked in close to his chest and his knees close to his chest as well. Then behind him he heard the roar of a hunter, then another, and another. He yelled and asked what had happened but no sound came out. Suddenly a motion of colours sped past him. He was almost blinded by the colour. Even with his filters on he had to squint. He still couldn't make out anything. Then a Grunt squealed. He couldn't ask what had happened so he tucked his legs and arms in closer. He then saw a bright white dot that got bigger. He braced himself for a rough landing but nothing happened. He just found himself standing on the ground.

He turned around for the Hunters and the Grunt that had screamed and found himself staring at something else. Nothing could have prepared him for this. They were hardly recognisable. There were three huge chunks of meat lying on the ground, they were orange and covered in blood. He could see ones shield sticking out from inside its body. The Grunt was still the same shape just inside out. He had to look away otherwise he would have thrown up. The smell of burning flesh hung in the air around the bodies.

"I shouldn't have bought the Hunters." The Arbiter said, "They are much too big and cumbersome to get through the portal. At least the others made it." And he walked to the other Hunters. John heard him say that he wanted two of them to wait by the portal incase any Covenant got through. Then he said the same to ten Grunts. We wouldn't have time to set up the turrets so they stayed here.

"Everyone, lets move." He barked and the remaining Hunter, twenty-six Grunts and thirteen Elites walked off into the nearest tunnel.

Truth sighed, he did not wish to flee the battle but he had no choice. It was go or be killed. That's why he told the pilot to set a slipspace route so that they exited directly above The Arc out of the

range of their Orbital Gun Platforms. He couldn't see anything out of the view panel's except the black pf slipspace.

"Hierarch, we will arrive shortly." The pilot told him,

"Good work pilot. Girt, heat up our turrets for when we arrive." He said.

"Of course," Girt replied. He tapped a few buttons and the turrets became active.

"Load up all of our Phantoms and Seraph fighters Gref. Get me in one. When we arrive I want them all to be launched to Earth." Truth boomed down the speaker.

"Yes sir." Gref replied. Truth was then escorted to the nearest bay and was sucked into a Phantom.

"I want an escort to Earth, when we arrive your pilots can join the battle in space. I also want this ships GravLift to be activated when we arrive so as I can get back here quickly." He said nervously. He wasn't nervous because of the Demon or The Arbiter and his new race which had been called The Rogues. He was nervous because of the Flood. In the past few units he had received reports of Flood life forms on Earth. He needed to active The Arc quickly.

"Hierarch, arriving in five, four, three two, one, now" the pilot said and Earth came into view. The Phantom lurched out the bay and he felt its engines roar to life. They sped forward and in no time at all they had reached the Gazeeb Cover. The Phantoms unloaded onto what looked like a wasteland. Wrecked vehicles littered the ground, corpses lay everywhere along with the corpses of Flood. A green mist hung in the air along with a putrid smell. His chair hovered over the bodies as if they weren't there as he was taken to the entrance of The Arc. Rouge bodies were hanging over the top of the hole. Brutes and Jackals rushed forward to secure the top as Drones flew down to secure the pit. Truth was tied to a metal plate and was lowered into the hole and when he reached the bottom he was moving out of the way of the Brutes when there was a roar from the top. A Brute came falling down the hole and landed on his neck, it snapped and he went limp.

Then, a Jackal came falling down, then three more. Energy swords appeared at the top and cut the cables that were holding the Brutes up. They all fell in quick succession. Of the forty-seven Brutes that had landed on Earth, only twenty-one were left. The Drones were hissing at each other, arguing, talking, Truth could not understand their language. They pressed on further into the hole when they came to the portal. Truth read out the text and after he turned to his Covenant,

"My brothers. We have reached the portal. This day will be etched into your families' names. You shall live in honour and you will die with it. We shall now enter and activate The Arc. We shall emerge victorious." He waited for the response and was rewarded with the confident roars and screams from them. He waited at the portal and entered after his Brutes

Arbiter cautiously advanced into another tunnel. This place seemed to be full of them. Round every corner he had to keep checking for Truth

and his Brutes but no-one was there. Then when he turned the next corner he stared upon a corridor littered with bodies of Brutes, Jackals and a few bodies that didn't look like Covenant or Flood. He then got an eerie feeling and he told everyone to watch out. As he progressed the feeling got worse. He dreaded it. Then, without warning, one of the unknown bodies off the floor rose up and floated up off the floor. It was silver and it glowed. Its design was angular, it had a lot of points on it and it was protected by what looked like the same material as the Hunters shields. There were two needle like guns on its side. Then, the rest of them rose. They made a whirring sound and when the first one squealed they all opened fire. Lasers shot out from their weapons. They burned The Arbiters armour and he had to activate his camouflage. Three Grunts and an Elite had already fallen because of the surprise. He fired at the nearest one and watched as his bullets bounced off its energy shield. He lobbed a Plasma Grenade underneath it and he saw it disappear under the smoke. He was satisfied until he saw it reappear unharmed. He ordered everyone to fall back when he saw the Demon standing over a flaming machine. He then launched a grenade out of his gun and it tore straight through the next one and it spiralled out of control and hit the one next to it. With only five left the Hunter joined in. He fired and fired until everyone was blown up.

"What are these things?" John asked.

"I don't know. They must be a form of guardian of The Arc." The Arbiter replied.

"Whatever they are, they are bloody dangerous." He said looking at one of the flaming machines, he saw a light that was still winking; he shot it until it went out and then he proceeded.

Tunnels were plentiful. According to his mission clock, John had been walking for 2 hours and 57 minutes. His legs were beginning to ache. He didn't say anything though. Partly because he didn't want to give away their position to any enemies, but it was mostly because he didn't want to moan in front of the Covenant. He had spent 3 years killing off their race and then they just decide to switch sides, just like that. It just didn't make any sense. But he had no reason to complain, they had new allies and that meant new technology. Their ships could be equipped with plasma turrets, their weapons could be made more lethal. They could now win this war. As John was away in thought there was a strange humming noise that filled the air. It echoed through the corridors and John felt his hairs stand on end. He levelled his rifle.

"Do you hear that?" John asked The Arbiter,

"What? I can't hear anything. Be quiet or you'll give us away." He replied back. John became puzzled. What was that noise? He tried not to pay any attention to it but he couldn't help it. After passing through more tunnels and more passageways they approached a room. After the Hunter had made sure it was clear they entered. As soon as John had stepped over the threshold the buzzing stopped. John surveyed the room. He didn't like it. There had plenty of places for Covenant to hide. There were boxes and corners and he could have sworn he heard something move in the ceiling above them. When everyone had stepped into the room a stone slab fell and blocked the way out. A Grunt panicked and shot it with his Plasma Pistol. It left scorch marks where it had burnt.

"Stop it. What do you think you are doing?" a black armoured Elite yelled,

"I scared Excellency. Me wanna go home." He snivelled and he dropped to the floor shaking. Two orange Grunts walked over to him, sat him up and dumped him by the door. John then looked at the room again. It was lit by an unknown source. There did not seem to be any lights, or any windows. He couldn't see any. In the centre of the room there was a glowing orb. It was probably the source of light. An Elite stepped forward towards it and was a meter away from it. His face was aglow with curiosity. He reached a hand forward. The Arbiter noticed him,

"What are you doing, NO!" he yelled.

The buzzing noise filled John's ears again. He jumped behind the nearest box and was followed by The Arbiter, the Grunts ran about and the Hunter crouched behind his shield. The light went out and all went pitch black. The buzzing noise was giving John a headache. He was getting scared. The sound of a hatch opening frightened him and then it was followed by the screams of the Rogues. He tried to activate his torch but it wouldn't work. He told The Arbiter to remain as quiet as possible. A plasma bolt whizzed past his head and he almost jumped. After what was the most terrifying moment of his life, the light came back on. He edged himself around the corner. The room was crawling with Flood. They had completely desolated the Rogues. They were lying on the floor smouldering. The orb in the middle of the room was still glowing and was now spinning. The Flood seemed to be organized as they shifted bodies into piles and they stood guard around the slab. He was watching them to see what they would do to The Arc. He was then alerted by the sound of plasma fire. The noise was coming from behind the slab. The Flood gathered around there and readied themselves. Some piled bodies in front of it to try and stop the newcomers. John sat there next to The Arbiter waiting. His breath was making a loud noise so he calmed down. This could be the biggest thing he ever did. He could stop The Flood and Truth. He would save the ultimate prize—Earth. He had no time to think; he turned to The Arbiter and told him,

"In the distraction we run to the back of the room and wait till they have whittled each other down. Ok?" he asked. Arbiter nodded. John turned back to the door and wiped his visor, it was covered in grime and dust. The door was glowing a sickly orange. It suddenly burst into flames and was launched forward into a group of five Flood. They were smeared across the floor and the rest were pummelled by red plasma fire. Red plasma, which could only mean one thing. Brutes. He counted to three and both he and The Arbiter ran for cover behind the furthest box at the back of the room. They were lucky that they didn't get seen as they had ran into open ground. He launched himself for the box and skidded behind it. He was followed by the Arbiter. He looked round the corner and was shocked to see that the Covenant had already killed all The Flood. They were walking around checking if there were any survivors. One had just checked a body when it re-animated along with six others. Surprised by the attack the Covenant were quickly cut down. After the fight only eleven Brutes remained. After they had made sure they had killed everyone by shooting each body another five times, Truth entered the chamber along with thirty-two Jackals and forty-nine Drones. He screeched something and Jackals and Drones moved to secure the door. John

checked how many grenades he had and how many The Arbiter had. In total they had seven. That wasn't enough. He looked around and noticed a pile where the Flood had placed dozens of Plasma Grenades and Fragmentation Grenades. He crawled stealthily to the pile and threw them back to The Arbiter. He caught them and made a pile. After they had all been thrown and carefully placed in a pile John crawled back.

"Right how many Plasma Grenades have we got... thirteen." He whispered. "And we have... sixteen Frag Grenades. What we must do is prime as many Plasma Grenades as possible and aim for Truth. Two at a time and if all goes well we should have enough ammo and Frags to finish off the rest. OK?" Arbiter nodded, "It's been a pleasure working with you if we don't make it." John said. He really meant it. The Arbiter was a skilled warrior with vast talents.

"Likewise" The Arbiter replied. John grabbed seven Plasma Grenades and The Arbiter grabbed the remaining six.

"3â€|2â€|1â€|NOW" he yelled and he primed two grenades and lobbed them at Truth. They latched on to him along with two of Arbiter's. Before they had chance to detonate he lobbed two more and Truth was blasted out of his chair. The Covenant, just figuring out what had happened, were caught by John's fire. John was forced to duck as they returned fire and plasma slashed at the air above him. He primed two Frag Grenades and lobbed them. There was a bang followed by the howls of Brutes and the screams of Jackals. The Arbiter fired both his Plasma Rifles until they overheated and he then threw a Frag Grenade under a group of Jackals and they scattered but were caught by the shrapnel. John turned back round the corner and unloaded a clip of his MA8B into a group of Brutes who were pinning the Arbiter down. After a few headshots they all went down. There weren't that many left now but he didn't let his guard down. After seven more minutes of continuous fire and ducking down behind cover the Covenant forces were all dead. John double checked every corpse as he walked through them. He looked at a suspicious Drone and it flew up and shot John in the chest. His shield was half gone but The Arbiter quickly put an end to him. John waited until his shield had recharged before carrying on. When he reached Truth's body he ripped it from its chair and hauled it over his shoulder. He checked to see if he was still alive and found that he was unconscious. When they had checked all the bodies they John took some grenades and made a trap around the door and around the brightly glowing ball that was The Arc. _ There, that should keep them from getting near it until we get back,_ he thought. John checked his weapon and turned to The Arbiter,

"Right, when we get back to the surface I want you to get as many of your men as you can and get them down here, not Hunters. I will radio Lord Hood and get him to send down a lot of automated turrets. Ok?" John asked,

"I understand." He replied.

"Lets go then" he said and he turned and ran out the door. After the long journey back to the portal John stopped for a quick breather from the constant running. The portal glowed an eerie orange and it hurt John's eyes. The Arbiters armour was scratched and chipped. John looked at his own and it was no better. It had paint missing and hydrostatic gel was leaking from underneath one of his arm joints. The thick liquid emerged and then bubbled. His arm was hurt and he

had a feeling that it was sprained and bruised. John stepped into the portal and was greeted by darkness.

10. A Voyage To Harvest

Chapter 10****

****_Location: ONI HQ, Australia, Earth._****

Captain Gurney stood before five ONI spooks. Not a good thing considering that these people could have you trialled for treason for just flinching at the wrong time. They were sat around a huge oak table with seven empty chairs. He had beads of sweat dripping down his forehead and he didn't dare wipe it off.

"Come on then Captain, we are very busy." The closest one said.

"Right, as you know the Prophet of Truth landed on Earth but the rest of his fleet have exited Earth space on an outbound vector that would take them to Harvest. Now this may not sound important but we intercepted several transmissions speaking of a downed Covenant ship that fell on Harvest during the battle and its navigation database was not destroyed. They also said it had information about their home world called Gun'uoy'dunhi. Our AI's have tried to translate it and the closest they came was, Holy Place Of Birth. If we get to Harvest first and find that ship then we might have a chance to locate their home world and take the fight to their doorstep. I strongly recommend that you let me take some ships to there and find that navigation crystal." He said carefully choosing his words. He turned to a screen board next to him to give him a view of Harvest.

"The ship is said to be around here." He told them and a red circle appeared in the surface of the rotating gas giant. "It would take my ships around five hours of uninterrupted slipspace to get there in the fastest possible time." He said and he looked pleadingly at them. He already knew the answer but he tried anyway.

"Please wait outside whilst we discuss this matter." The spook with grey hair told him. Gurney turned and headed for the door. It slid open silently as he neared it. There was a bench against the wall and he used it. As he sat down the door slid shut again. There were three Marines posted outside the door. Each held a new MA8B rifle and had a Dominator as a side-arm. He sat there with his head in his hands for eight minutes until he was called back in. as he stood up he dreaded the word that was going to deny him his request. He entered the dimly lit room and he looked at the nearest spook. The one at the far end spoke this time however.

"We have decided to accept your request." He said plainly. Gurney's heart lifted. "However, you will not be taking a UNSC ship. You will be taking Truth's ship. It landed in Africa over the Gazeeb Cover. There has been no-one entering or exiting it for some time so if you get there soon you should be able to sneak aboard and use it to exit to Harvest. When in Slipspace you will get everyone in the bridge and vent all atmosphere from the ship, apart from the bridge, just to get rid of any extra Covenant that are on board. Any questions?" he asked.

"No sir!" he replied with a hint of eagerness in his voice.

"Good, right then. You will have two platoons of ODS'Ts to take with you. You will need an X5Y Jet to get you there fast enough. I suggest you take your squad and ODS'Ts to the nearest airport. It is a ten minute drive from here." He explained.

"Sir yes Sir." And he turned on his heel and left.

The Warthog column was two minutes away from the airport. Each of these forty-nine Warthogs had their chain guns removed and replaced with two seats. Gurney struggled to keep his vehicle on the road. The column was tightly packed and they needed to get as fast as possible and this was the only way. At the airport they would get the Warthogs into the plane and there they would have their guns refitted. It would take half an hour to get to Africa in this jet. It flew at thirty thousand five hundred miles an hour. They drove between two skyscrapers and rounded the next corner and the airport came into view. They sped up towards it and parked under the jet. It had three Locusts attached to the back of it. Everyone made sure they had stripped their vehicle of any spare ammo and weapons and had slung them over their shoulders before entering the plane. Gurney was the last to enter. He had a Shark, an MA8B and two Dominators. He had ten extra clips of ammo and another load of rockets. He climbed the steps and just saw the door on the back of the massive jet open for the Warthogs to be pushed in. he hurried in and the door sealed behind him. He moved through the hustle and the crowded space and told everyone to spread out to avoid injuries. He placed his Shark in one of the roof racks and the extra load with it. Others were doing the same. People were stowing SN-44S rifles, Punishers, Sharks and even some portable turrets. After the Warthogs had been loaded and everyone was seated the jet took off with incredible speed. Once they were safely in the air Gurney got up off his bench and turned to face everyone.

"Right everyone listen up. When we get to Africa we get back in the 'Hogs and go for a little road trip. Truth's ship is currently situated over the Gazeeb Cover waiting for us. We need to go and meet her. We know that the GravLift is still working so that is our point of entry. When we get in get to the bridge. Once _everyone_ is in the bridge then we vent all atmosphere out of the ship to kill any remaining Covenant. When done we will take off and set a slipspace course for Harvest. Anyone who doesn't understand?" he shouted through the plane. No spoke up. "Good. Ready yourselves as we will be arriving shortly." He told them and he sat down. He checked his MA8B and his Dominators for full clips.

After twenty-seven minutes the pilot spoke through the microphone,

"Thank you for flying UNSC airways," he said mockingly, "we hope you had a good flight and I hope we kick some alien ass!" and everyone started laughing. As the doors opened everyone jumped out. They filed round to the back of the plane where they got back in the Warthogs and drove towards the Gazeeb Cover. After another ten minutes of driving the base loomed into view. Truths ship could be seen hovering thirty meters off the ground. There was a purple-pink beam that reached down and grabbed the floor. A big brass gate was seen and was covered in scorch marks. The Warthogs stopped outside it and the three engineers hopped out of the 'Hogs and put three satchel charges

on the hinges. They rushed back to the vehicles and pushed the detonators. There was an almighty BANG followed by a slam and then a huge cloud of dust swept over them. After the dust had cleared the gate was lying on the floor and beyond it lay the base of the GravLift which had been stocked with their eerie purple metallic boxes which gave off a faint luminous glow. The Warthogs drove off and were surrounded by a green mist. The smell was sickening, it was decaying flesh. Gurney would have held his hand over his mouth had he not been driving. What the hell happe-

"Contacts!" the gunner yelled and seven Phantoms flew overhead. They fired their pulse lasers and were greeted with forty nine anti aircraft guns. Their guns were blown out of the sky and one of the crafts arced up and landed on top of another one. The crushed Phantom flew into the floor and exploded sending dirt and metal scattering. The remaining ones turned round for a strafe run. Three Warthogs went up in flames and melted as their bodywork was sizzling away.

"You want more!" SGT Griff yelled as he fired until his arms were numb. "Come get it you alien bastards!" and he turned his aim to the next Phantom. Another two Warthogs went up in flames and Captain keyed the team freq,

"Attention, follow me and don't try anything heroic. I don't wanna lose anymore men. That's an order." He yelled through gritted teeth.

"Ah shit" the PVT next to him said as something wet made a puddle on the seat. Gurney's hands were numb as he manoeuvred through the buildings and wreckages. He heard an explosion behind and a Phantom soared overhead and slammed into a building. It collapsed upon itself and sent fist sized bricks flying towards them. One flew straight through his windshield and hit the PVT squarely in the forehead. He slumped over and didn't move, blood pouring from his face. After another five minutes of a wild goose chase the Phantoms had finally been blown out of the sky but at a cost. Eight of the Warthogs had been destroyed and seven other men had been critically injured. They drove through the base until they reached the base of the GravLift. The lift was big enough for a Warthog to fit through so he thought of another plan.

"OK everyone. This is it. Everyone get ready, and follow me. I want the 'Hogs comin' up last. If the shit hits the fan then they can be our back-up. Lets go." He told them all and he felt his stomach lurch as he was pulled inside the ship.

End
file.